

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6169

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SP

SUBJECT: COMMENTS OF INFORMATION MINISTER ON INTERNAL POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENTS

1. I CALLED ON MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND TOURISM
ANDRES REGUERA AFTERNOON AUGUST 11. I HAVE KNOWN
REGUERA FOR SOME TIME, BOTH AS UNDER SECRETARY OF
AGRICULTURE AND PREVIOUSLY AS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL
MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ORIENTED UDE. HE
IS NOW CLOSE TO MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY OSORIO, WHO
IN TURN, HAS TAKEN HIS DISTANCE FROM THE PRESENT
LEADER OF UDE, FREDERICO SILVA MUNOZ. REGUERA IS
ESSENTIALLY A POLITICAN AND THE FACT THAT HE WAS PUT
INTO THE INFORMATION MINISTRY INDICATES THAT OSORIO
HAS CONSIDERABLE CONFIDENCE IN HIS ABILITY TO HANDLE
THIS CRUCIAL SECTOR.

2. REGUERA SAID THAT IN SPITE OF THE MANY DIFFICULTIES
WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WAS FACING, HE BELIEVED THAT IT
WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO COMPLETE A PROGRAM OF DOMOCRATIC
REFORM AND TO ACHIEVE ELECTIONS BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE
BY NEXT YEAR, QUITE POSSIBLY IN APRIL. THE GOVERNMENT
BOTH ITS CIVILIAN AND MIITARY MEMBERS, UNDER THE
LEADERSHIP OF SUAREZ, WAS UNITED AND WAS DEDICATED
TO THE DOMOCRATIZATION OF SPAIN. HE COMMENTED THAT
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IN THIS GOVERNMENT, NO MINISTER PLACED HIS OWN PERSONAL

POSITION OR AMBITION AHEAD OF THE COLLECTIVE.

3. REGUERA INDICATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT A PROSPECTIVE REFERENDUM WHICH DID NOT RECEIVE THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE CORTES WOULD BE DANGEROUS BECAUSE IT WOULD COMMIT THE KING PERSONALLY TOO MUCH. IT ALSO HAD THE DISADVANTAGE OF NOT GIVING THE POLITICAL PARTIES, INCLUDING THE OPPOSITION, A SUFFICIENT ROLE. THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOW CONSIDERING THE FOLLOWING COURSE OF ACTION, WHICH HE THOUGH WOULD ULTIMATELY BE ADOPTED, EITHER THIS MONTH OR EARLY NEXT MONTH. IN CONSULTATION WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD DRAFT A SERIES OF FAIRLY SIMPLE QUESTIONS TO BE PUT TO THE COUNTRY IN A POPULAR CONSULTATION THESE QUESTIONS WOULD DEAL WITH WHETHER THE COUNTRY WANTED A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, A PARLIAMENT ELECTED BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE FREED TRADE UNIONS, ETC, THE TEXT WHICH MIGHT ALSO INCLUDE SOME REFERENCE TO THE GOVERNMENT CARRYING OUT THE ABOVE PRINCIPLES BY DECREE LAW, WOULD THEN BE SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE MOVEMENT AND TO THE CORTES FOR APPROVAL. HE EXPRESSED CERTAINLY THAT THE COUNCIL AND THE CORTES WOULD OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVE THE TEXT. IN FOLLOWING SUCH APPROVAL, THE POPULAR CONSULTATION WOULD BE HELD AND WITH A GOOD RESULT WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HOPED FOR, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD THEN PROCEED TO ISSUE DECREE LAWS BRINGING ABOUT THE NECESSARY CHANGES IN THE VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTUALLY TO BE DRAFTED WOULD BE THE ELECTROL LAW WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE PREPARED WITH THE GREATEST CARE. REGUERA INDICATED THAT THROUGHOUT THIS WHOLE PROCESS, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SEEK TO REACH A CONSENSUS WITH ALL THE POLITICAL GROUPS EXCEPT THE COMMUNISTS. HE BELIEVED THAT THE POPULAR CONSULTATION WOULD TAKE PLACE AROUND THE MIDDLE OF OCTOBER.

4. WITH REGARD TO THE COMMUNISTS, REGUERA SAID THAT HE SAW NO WAY IN WHICH THE COMMUNIST PARTY COULD PLAY A ROLE AS LEGALIZATION WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. CONFIDENTIAL

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HE WAS CONVICTED THAT EVEN A NEW CORTES ELECTED BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE WOULD NOT AGREE TO A ROLE BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY SINCE HE BELIEVED THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE SPANISH WOULD REJECT COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY AS BEING INIMICAL TO THE ECONOMIC STATUS THEY HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE LAST YEARS.

5. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION ABOUT MILITARY ATTITUDES,

REGUERA SAID THAT THERE WERE, OF COURSE, ELEMENTS IN THE ARMY THAT WERE RESTIVE ABOUT DEMOCRATIC REFORM THE GOVERNMENT CONSTANTLY HAD TO BEAR THIS IN MIND AS IT PROCEEDED. HOWEVER, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT BY 1980 THE LAST OFFICER WHO NOW HAS GENERAL RANK WOULD BE RETIRED AND A NEW GENERATION OF MILITARY OUTLOOK AND ATTITUDE WILL HAVE TAKEN OVER.

6. WITH RESPECT TO POLITICAL PARTIES, REGUERA BELIEVED THAT POLITICAL FORMATIONS WOULD ESSENTIALLY BE LIMITED TO A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CENTER, A SOCIALIST SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEFT AND FOR LACK OF A BETTER EXPRESSION. A NATIONAL MOVEMENT RIGHT. THERE WOULD, OF COURSE BE EXTREMES TO THE RIGHT AND TO THE LEFT, BUT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE SIGNIFICANCE. HE BELIEVED THAT THE ONLY ISSUE NOW SEPARATING THE VARIOUS CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WAS THAT RELATING TO THE LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, BUT HE FELT THAT AS GENERAL ELECTIONS APPROACHED THERE WOULD BE PRESSURES TO CONSOLIDATE. IT WAS ALSO HIS VIEW THAT PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ SHARED MANY OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC VIEWS AND MIGHT WELL BE EXPECTED TO JOIN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GROUPING.

7. REGUERA COMMENTED THAT DESPITE DIFFICULTIES AND TENSIONS WHICH FACED THE GOVERNMENT, HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT IN OCTOBER THERE WOULD NOT BE THE LABOR CONFRONTATIONS WHICH MANY PREDICTED. STABLER

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